

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 05655 282001Z

ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSC-01 AID-05 HEW-04 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 OES-09
PM-05 NSC-05 SS-15 /083 W
-----001356 291506Z /42

R 281912Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 5655

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, CI

SUBJECT: NEW HEALTH MINISTER NAMED

REF: SANTIAGO 5551

1. IN A BRIEF SWEARING-IN CEREMONY JULY 27 AIR FORCE COLONEL CARLOS MARIO JIMENEZ VARGAS BECAME THE NEW MINISTER OF HEALTH. THE CHILEAN AIR FORCE (FACH) THUS RETAINS ITS CABINET POST FOLLOWING THE GOC SHAKE-UP WHICH SAW JIMENEZ' PREDECESSOR -- GENERAL FERNANDO MATTHEI -- MOVE UP AS THE FACH REPRESENTATIVE ON THE GOVERNING JUNTA IN PLACE OF OUSTED GENERAL GUSTAVO LEIGH (REFTEL). AS MATTHEI, JIMENEZ, A FIGHTER PILOT AND OPERATIONS OFFICER, HAS NO MEDICAL EXPERIENCE, HAVING HAD ONLY NORMAL AIR FORCE ASSIGNMENTS IN HIS 25 YEARS OF SERVICE.

2. IN A BRIEF ENCOUNTER WITH THE PRESS AFTER BEING SWORN IN, JIMENEZ ACKNOWLEDGED HIS LACK OF EXPERIENCE OR KNOWLEDGE IN HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT, BUT EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT HIS FACH TRAINING WOULD PUT HIM IN GOOD STEAD. HE PROMISED AN "OPEN DOORS" POLICY FOR THE PRESS AND AN EFFORT TO UPGRADE HEALTH CONDITIONS IN CHILE.

3. BIOGRAPHIC DATA: BORN IN CHUQUICAMATA ON APRIL 13, 1932. JIMENEZ GRADUATED FROM THE AIR FORCE AVIATION SCHOOL IN JANUARY 1953 AND RECEIVED HIS FIGHTER PILOT'S WINGS THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

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PAGE 02 SANTIA 05655 282001Z

DURING HIS CAREER, HE HAS HAD AN ASSORTMENT OF COMMAND AND STAFF ASSIGNMENTS, INCLUDING COMMAND OF THREE FACH WINGS AND DIRECTOR OF FACH OPERATIONS. IN AUGUST 1977 HE WAS DECORATED FOR "DISTINGUISHED SERVICES ON SEPTEMBER 11, 1973", PRESUMABLY FOR HIS PART IN THE MILITARY COUP WHICH BROUGHT THE PRESENT REGIME INTO POWER. MARRIED TO THE FORMER ANNIE AUDREY TOWNSEND CRIGHTON, THE COUPLE HAVE FOUR CHILDREN: JACQUELINE, RICARDO, VERONICA AND

SUSANA.
LANDAU

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HEALTH
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SANTIA05655
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780312-0039
Format: TEL
From: SANTIAGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978079/aaaaahgf.tel
Line Count: 64
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cd58827a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 SANTIAGO 5551
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2099312
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW HEALTH MINISTER NAMED
TAGS: PINR, CI
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cd58827a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014